

“If we see money being misspent, we're going to put a stop to it, and we will call it out and we will publicize it.” – President Obama speaking at the White House on March 12, 2009

WASHINGTON. D.C. – As President Obama announces his intention to accelerate implementation of stimulus spending, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Darrell Issa (R-CA) called on the President to fulfill his promise of stimulus oversight and transparency.

“From the very inception of the stimulus package, the argument that it was urgently needed to reinvigorate our economy lacked credibility since 93 percent of discretionary spending would happen in years to come,” Issa said. “With unemployment reaching its highest level since 1983, President Obama is now forced to grapple with the reality that he has put in place an impossible scenario where the federal bureaucracy will be asked to absorb and disperse an unprecedented amount of taxpayer dollars without any reliable mechanism in place to track and monitor stimulus spending.”

In March, Issa sent a letter to Earl Devaney, Chair of the Recovery Act Transparency and Accountability Board, calling into question Administration guidelines released by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that contradict the President's promise of an "unprecedented oversight effort" of the nearly \$800 billion included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act signed into law last month.

"The President promised an 'unprecedented oversight effort' and to this point, has failed to follow-through," Issa noted. "President Obama has stressed the need to make sure that every single dollar of stimulus funding is well spent – yet there has not yet been an explanation for why the taxpayers are paying for pork-barrel projects such as John Murtha's airport for no one."

Below are questions Issa's asked Devaney to address:

1.

What data will be disclosed on Recovery.gov? Will each agency publish the reports mandated by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act on its own web site or will everything be

centrally housed at Recovery.gov? If the information and reports are not centrally housed, will there be a central aggregator or some other way to automate accessing the various agency reports?

2.

Will reports from recipients (states, cities, private entities, etc.) be in a standard format? If so, what is that standard format? What are the fields the Administration will require from recipients and make available to the public? Will the Administration direct agencies to publish the recipient reports in their entirety?

3.

How deeply will the data be reported? Will there be disclosure of every transaction between every recipient, contractor, and subcontractor in the supply chain up to when the project is completed? Will the Administration require all states and/or cities to report where each dollar of taxpayer money went and what was accomplished with each project?

4. What procedures do you have in place or do you plan to put in place to enforce the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's requirement that contracts funded under the Act are to be awarded as fixed-price contracts through the use of competitive procedures? If you do not mandate disclosure of every transaction down to the contractor and subcontractor level, how will you be able to enforce this requirement?

[From USA Today, 5/6/2009](#) – Devaney said that after the first data become available in October, the board will wait six to nine months for the White House Office of Management and Budget to issue new guidance on how far down the spending chain the money must be tracked. "I'm going to push them for as much data as possible," he said.

Devaney's spokeswoman, Nancy DiPaolo, said the website may not be completed until next spring."